



General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 April 2006

Original: English

Sixtieth session

Agenda item 112 (e)

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections:
election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council**

Note verbale dated 11 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and has the honour to attach herewith an aide-memoire regarding the election of the Russian Federation to the Human Rights Council (see annex), and to draw attention to the context of Russia's pledges in the sphere of promotion and protection of human rights.



Annex to the note verbale dated 11 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire on the question of the election of the Russian Federation to the Human Rights Council

In September 2005, the decision to create a new main United Nations human rights body — the Human Rights Council — was adopted at the meeting of the Heads of State and Government (Summit 2005) in New York.

Within the framework of implementation of this historical decision, on 15 March 2006, the General Assembly at its sixtieth session adopted resolution 60/251 which contains the provisions regarding the mandate, membership and election procedure to the Council, and also indicates that the first elections to the Council will be held on 9 May 2006 at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

The Government of the Russian Federation has taken a decision to submit the candidature of Russia for election to the Human Rights Council for one of the six seats allocated in the body to the Eastern European regional group.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the development of constructive international cooperation in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights. The Russian Federation (USSR) was a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights from the date of its creation (at present the Commission has completed its work). Our country actively supports the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Evidence of this support are four visits of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to Russia (including two official visits by Mrs. Louise Arbour), and also a decision of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 2005 regarding an annual voluntary contribution of US\$ 2 million to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights beginning this year.

Active cooperation with the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, which have been transferred to the Human Rights Council, constitutes an integral part of the policy of the Russian Federation. During the past several years our country hosted visits by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, the Special Rapporteur on child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children, and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. We have scheduled for the current year visits of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture.

Besides, the Russian Federation actively cooperates with regional human rights institutions and mechanisms, in particular with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Baltic Sea States.

Russia is a party to six core international human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In accordance with our international obligations under these treaties, Russia timely submits periodic reports to the relevant human rights treaty bodies. In terms of the number of already presented reports (38) Russia is among the leading nations of the world. Besides, the Russian Federation recognizes, where applicable, the competence of human rights treaty bodies to consider individual complaints on alleged violations of obligations regarding specific rights and freedoms under relevant treaties.

Russian representatives have always been active participants in drafting new international legal documents in the field of human rights. At the same time the Russian Federation believes that elaboration of new human rights standards should be one of the main areas of activity of the Human Rights Council and its working bodies.

We proceed from the assumption that States themselves should bear the main responsibility for the protection of human rights and freedoms. The Russian Federation is convinced that the Human Rights Council's activities should encourage the development of constructive international cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, the strengthening of the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights on the basis of equity and equality in accordance with the goals and principles stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. Russia is confident that human rights should contribute to bringing together different countries and groups of countries and improve the atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in international relations.

Given our record in the field of international cooperation for human rights, we believe that our partners in the General Assembly will offer their support to the candidature of the Russian Federation during the elections to the Human Rights Council on 9 May 2006.